

A NEW SPECIES OF OTHONNA

BERTIL NORDENSTAM

(*Smuts Memorial Fellow, Kirstenbosch, 1962/63*)

Othonna hallii B. Nord. sp. nov.

Differt a *O. spektakelensis* Compton, foliis minoribus succulentibus (non herbaceis, reticulatis), marginis foliorum laevis vel leviter denticulatis (non manifeste et dense denticulato-ciliatis).

Rootstock short, obconical or turnip-shaped, hard and woody, up to 4 cm. in diam., abruptly tapering to a vertical taproot.

Leaves rosulate from the crown, with white wool between the bases, numerous, ascending, glabrous, oblanceolate or spatulate, 2–8 cm. long, 0.3–2 mm. wide, thickish and somewhat fleshy, without distinct venation (except sometimes when dry), dull green or slightly glaucous, often red or purplish near the base. *Leaf-margins* smooth or minutely and laxly denticulate. *Leaf-tips* obtuse or rounded.

Peduncles solitary or a few together from the crown, scapose, erect, forking repeatedly to a lax panicle, normally 12–20 cm. high, glabrous, often somewhat purplish.

Involucral bracts 5–8, connate to $\frac{1}{4}$ – $\frac{1}{3}$, ovate, 4–5 mm. long, unnerved, narrowly membrane-edged, acute, often with purplish tips.

Ray-florets 5–8, yellow; *tube* 1.5 mm. long, cylindric; *lamina* oblong, 5–7 mm. long, 2–3 mm. wide, minutely dentate at the apex; *style* terete; *branches* flattened, 1 mm. long, obtuse; *pappus bristles* numerous (c. 50–60), straight, erect, white, 1.5–2 mm. long. *Achene* oblong-obovate, 2 mm. long, 1.5 mm. wide at the top, densely white-villous.

Disc-florets sterile, 3 mm. long (excl. ovary), campanulate above; *lobes* deltoid, c. 0.8 mm. long; *pappus bristles* few to several (5–20) or sometimes numerous on the outer florets, white, 1.5 mm. long; *style* terete, tipped with a short cone with a basal ring of sweeping-hairs; anthers 1.2 mm. long incl. the ovate subacute appendage.

HOLOTYPE: Nordenstam 795 (LD). Isotypes to be lodged at BOL, K, NBG, PRE, S.M.

Flowering period: (May–) July–August.

VANRHYNSDORP: Koekenaap, NBG 361/54, H. Hall s.n., flowered in Kirstenbosch, May 7 1953 (NBG); 4 m. N of Holriver bridge, July 28 1962, Nordenstam

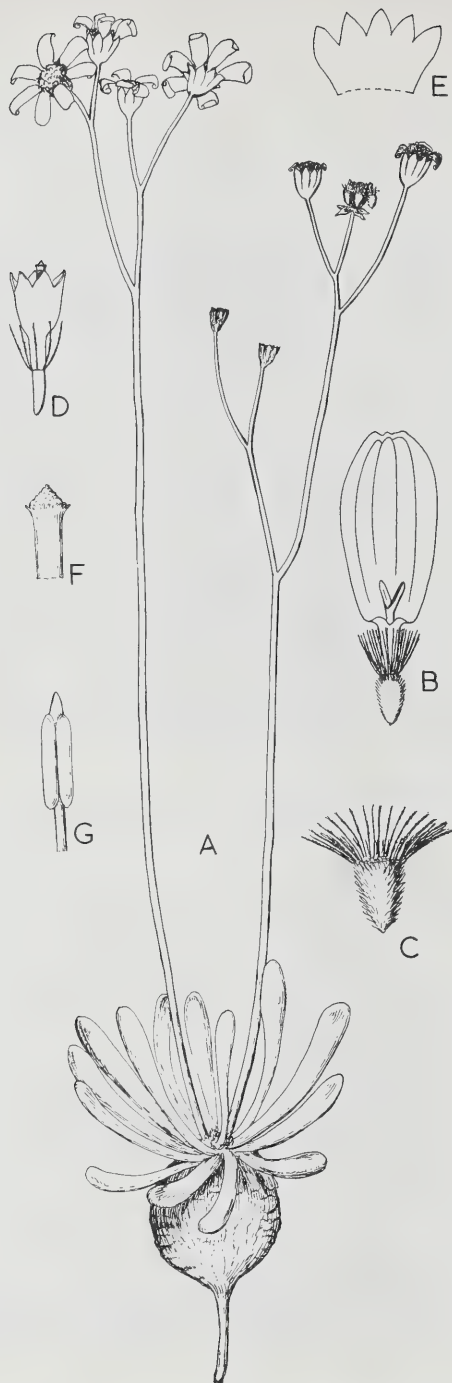


FIG. 1. *Othonna hallii*, plant from type collection, grown in Kirstenbosch. A Habit, nat. size. B Ray-floret, x5. C (Ray) achene, x5. D Disc-floret, x5. E Corolla of disc-floret, split up, x5. F Tip of disc style, x15. G Anther, x15.—Del. auct.

795 (LD), and Aug. 10 1962, Nordenstam 893 (LD); 6 m. N of Koekenaap on Nuwerus road, Aug. 11 1962, Nordenstam 939 (LD).

The new species is named after Mr. Harry Hall of Kirstenbosch, who first collected it. It comes closest to *Othonna spektakelensis* Compton, but differs from this in a number of characters. The leaves are succulent, not thin and with obvious venation. The leaf-margins are never as distinctly denticulate-ciliate as in *O. spektakelensis*, although a lax and minute denticulation sometimes occurs, esp. in plants from Koekenaap. In addition, *O. spektakelensis* normally has larger capitula, broader and shorter rays, and is generally more robust. In their ecology and geographical distribution the two species are rather different. *O. spektakelensis* is confined to stony shaly soil in a small area west of Springbok in Little Namaqualand. *O. hallii* is only known from two localities among quartzite pebbles just north of the Olifants River.

The two populations of *O. hallii* differ slightly in some respects. In the plants from Holriver the leaves are more fleshy and narrow, and the leaf-margins are normally quite smooth. The Koekenaap plants have broader and thinner leaves with usually minutely denticulate margins. Although these differences are maintained in cultivation, I regard them as too insignificant to justify a taxonomic distinction between the two populations even at varietal level.

It is not impossible, that *O. hallii* may be found in similar localities on Knersvlakte proper. It is likely, however, that it is endemic to the quartzite areas in Vanrhynsdorp Division, like many other species and even genera of various families.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author's research in South Africa has been made possible by tenure of the Smuts Memorial Fellowship (Cape Town), and by grants from the Swedish Natural Science Research Council, the Royal Swedish Academy of Science, and the Lennander Foundation (Uppsala).